

# The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, March 2. 1695.

Quest. 1.

**A** Gentleman last August (passing through Red Lion-Square) saw a Lady dressed in widows weeds with another (who wore a mask) going along with her; about the breaking of the last Frost he saw the same Lady with a Gentleman in the Coach with her in Budge-Row, desires your advice how he may know her name and place of abode; he thinks she may know his person by reading this when published: knowing she saw him both times and took notice of him too, and the last time seem'd to signify to him in the Coach somewhat of himself. He could give a very lively description of her if he thought it proper: Quære whether it be any indecency in the Lady to direct him to one whom he may discourse with to see if the Lady likes his designs; she may direct a Letter to Mr. Banian [a feigned name at Bishops Coffe-house, over against Southampton-Square in high Holbourn, directing him to the person.

*Ans.* Widows by report are seldom at a loss; but if before this time she should not be provided, this intimation may be no small kindness to her, since at least she may hear what advantageous bargain he has to propose: And if she should happen to be as much smitten with his pretty shape, Air, mien, and all that, as he has been with her face, by this she may be deliver'd from the many troublesome visits she must otherwise have made to all the fortune-tellers to have found out her *Sir Amedis*. But if instead of a gracious nod, the notice she took on him, was occasion'd by something in him that was particularly ridiculous, he may at least have the happiness to be Laught at by his Goddess, and we are willing to procure any felicity for such daring lovers.

Quest. 2. I am servant to a person in Town, and according to the usual custom of Apprentices have oblig'd my self to pay this Person what damages he lays to my charge and can prove; the said person has variety and considerable business the care and performance whereof lies mostly on me; almost a year since he committed his cash to my custody and I daily receive and pay abundance of small sums, and through the variety and multiplicity of business as aforesaid am hinder'd to cast up the cash so often as is necessary, and have met with mistakes therein, when money is wanting, as oblig'd, I make it up; the Query is, when I find money over, may not I reimburse my self and provide for a mistake too, on the other hand, without my master's knowledge, for I am perswaded from his temper, he will not suffer one mistake, to satisfy another, my design is wholly honest but am under some conflicts of mind in this matter therefore pray give your speedy answer.

*Ans.* You ought to keep an exact Account of such monies as you put into the Cash, to make up what's wanting; and so much we think you may honestly repay your self, but not take any farther advantage by what overplus you may meet with; and likewise to be well assured, what you think to be above your just accounts, is really so, and not fancied on the account of your own interest. This a reasonable master cannot be against, it being no injustice done him, tho' 'tis your best way to act in respect to yours as his temper and your own prudence shall advise you.

Quest. 3. Has the Bishop of Rome always been acknowledged as superiour to all other Bishops, as the Papists tell us, who say it was never disputed or contradicted, but by Hereticks, as they term us, since the pretended Reformation?

*Ans.* Let them but consult the decrees of the council of Nice assembled together by the Emperour Constantine, and they'll find 'twas so far from being approved, that the Bishops made a particular decree, to maintain, as they call'd it, the antient Custom, that all the Bishops through Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis should be under the superiority of the Bishop of Alexandria, notwithstanding the endeavours of the Bishops of Rome to usurp, and withhold it from them. And that the Church of Antioch and other Provinces and Churches should each one entirely retain their peculiar privileges.

Quest. 4. What were the decrees in the Lateran Council that the Greeks and Latins differed about?

*Ans.* The Greeks had some dislike to these following ones.

That the *Chrysme* and *Eucharist*, should be kept under Lock and Key.

That a private Confession of sins should be made once every year.

That an Election made by the Civil Magistrate, in spiritual promotions should be of no force.

That any person in Ecclesiastical Orders should not without great cause, promise fealty to any Layman.

That the Laws made by Princes should not prejudice Churches.

That Ecclesiastical persons should be exempted from all contributions.

That tribute should not be pay'd before tenths.

And that the Relicks of Saints should not be shown out of a Casket.

So high was the dissention, that the Greeks would not touch those Altars, that the Latins had offer'd up the Host on; till they had washed and purify'd them: They likewise new baptized those whom the Latins had before baptized.

Quest. 5. Being desirous to improve my self, encouraged by your repeated Civilities to the Female Sex, I beg some one of you to be Charitable enough to let me know which you think the best Histories, and fittest for a woman's reading.

*Ans.* First read some introduction to History, as *Whears* method of Reading Histories, *Claverius*, *Heylin's* Cosmography, *Howells* institution of History, &c. then before you enquire farther into the world, know something of your own Nation, by reading *Cambden* and *Blomes Britannia*, the *Chronicles* of the Kings of England, *Bishop Burners* History of the Reformation, *Daniels* History of England; after which read the other parts of the world as your inclination, or convenience shall direct you, of which you will find a pretty good account in these following books; *Rawleighs* History of the world, *Rushworths* Historical collections, *Andrews* and *Spotswoods* History of Scotland. The History of Ireland. *Davilla* of the civil wars of France. *Guichardin* of Italy. *Dappers* description of Africa, *Knowls* and *Rycarts* History of the Turks, *Josephus*, *Tacitus*, *Justin*, *Suetonius*, *Livy*, *Chardin*, *Thevenot*, and *Whealers* voyages, *Plutarchs* lives, *Stanleys* Lives, &c. These Authors, if a Woman has a sufficient leisure, and a Genius fit for History, are very proper for her, with several others we cannot at present think of, which when she's a little instructed in this science she'll be able either of her self, or by a good bookseller to be acquainted with.

Quest.



Quest. 6. I desire the favour of some short answer to these opinions of Spinoza, viz. That whatever happens is necessary, and that God is as necessarily determin'd to will as he is to understand, because his understanding and will are the same thing.

That the power of God, and the power of Nature being the same, if any thing happens above the power of Nature, we must confess that things happen which are above the power of God, which is absurd.

If miracles proceed from effects which are above our conceptions, we can prove nothing of 'em, because we cannot draw any clear consequence from a principle, whereof we comprehend nothing. And further that miracles are limited effects, which ought not necessarily to have a cause, whose Perfections hath no Limits; so that miracles do not necessarily prove the being of a God.

Ans. To the first; That altho these Faculties are the same thing in God, yet it is no impediment, but that to understand and to will may be very different Acts; even, as although the Mercy and Justice of God, be only one and the same Perfection in him, to punish and to forgive, are two acts which ought not to be confounded.

The second opinion supposes what we deny, viz. That the power of God and the power of Nature is but one and the same thing; It is equally absurd to affirm, that those things that we call miracles, are only certain rare events, which happen in consequence of some Laws of Nature which are unknown to us, for if these Laws are unknown to men, How was it possible that the Apostles should cause some of these extraordinary events to happen at their pronouncing certain words?

As to the Last, 'Tis false that we cannot conclude anything that is clear from an effect which is above the Capacity of our minds; since it is certain we may evidently conclude this, that the cause of such an effect is as much above us, as this effect surpasses our understanding. Those who see any Machine which produces a surprizing effect, and who are absolutely unacquainted with the Mathematicks, not conceiving how it can be perform'd, may they not, nay even ought they not to conclude, that this Machine has some Author, who has much more knowledge than they have? But if an effect be limited, it does not follow from thence that the cause must be limited too; for supposing a cause, the perfections whereof were not limited, whatever it would produce, must however be limited in this respect, because it is contradictory that one being absolutely perfect should be produced by another. Besides there are limited effects, which must necessarily have a cause whose power is infinite, as in the resurrection from the dead: For 'tis impossible to conceive that a power which is bounded can in a moment reestablish a rotten Carcass in the very same condition it was in during life.

Quest. 7. Whether the Copties and Armenians may be termed good Christians; or if they do not partake of the Schisms their forefathers have been guilty of?

Ans. Yes, since they all adore Jesus Christ, receive his doctrine and believe in him as God and Man; and altho 'twere true that their Ancestors were guilty of the Schism which is between them and the Western Churches, their posterity who are honest men, and hate us not, nor concern themselves in the Controversies, cannot be at all infected with their guilt.

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